Interview with Dr. R. H. Rigdon
at the University of Texas Medical
Branch in Galveston, February 21.

While Mr. Holtzman and I were in Houston in connection with the M. D. Anderson Virus Symposium we took an afternoon to go down to see Dr. Rigdon.

Rigdon is doing some current work of interest.

1. In a paper he is preparing for Texas Reports, he will demonstrate a 20% disparity between deaths from lung cancer and reported deaths from lung cancer. He has reviewed 194 cases of reported lung cancer deaths. He shows disparity between cause of death as determined in autopsy, cause of death as listed on the death certificate, and cause of death as quoted in vital statistics categories.

He referred to the forthcoming paper rather vaguely. We could not make out whether the disparity represented overreporting or underreporting.

He submitted this paper to the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. It was turned down on the ground, he said, that it contained "nothing new".

He expects the paper will appear some time within the next six months.

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2. He has in progress a considerable number of experiments designed to test the effect of huge doses of benzpyrene on various animals including chickens, mice and rats. They have perfected a technique of giving very large doses of this carcinogen in food. It produces a "blue effect". He showed us color slides of the animals involved and they all are, in fact, very blue. He cannot as yet explain this.

He put us on notice that chickens receiving these large doses of benzpyrene in food produced unfertile eggs. These results will be published -- again in Texas Reports -- before July. He thinks we may expect the results to be interpreted as substantiating claims of reduced fertility in cigarette smokers. He points out that the doses of benzpyrene administered to these chickens are many thousands of times greater than any benzpyrene any smoker could receive.

We asked him if he knew of any work on smoking and lung cancer going on in the general area, and he did not. He noted that "someone" was trying to remove the vending machines from

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the Medical Branch Hospital at Galveston. He did not mention the name.

He did not seem to be acquainted with Le Maistre (who is in Dallas).

We noted problems we anticipate in obtaining defense witnesses for the Oklahoma City case. Dallas seems to be the closest large medical center. We asked him if he knew anyone in Dallas that would be worthwhile talking to. He suggested Dr. Arthur Grollman. He had seen Grollman talking with Truman Rucker (Reynolds' local counsel in the Oklahoma City case) at a recent meeting of the law-medicine organization that Rucker belongs to.

Rigdon said that he did not know Grollman's views on the smoking lung cancer question. However, he stated that Grollman was a critical thinker and thought his views might be favorable.

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